2: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939)1948
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

342 [361] shelter and lights its own fire in the opening. During the rainy season, villages consisting of one or more beehive huts are built on slight hillocks above the course of a secondary stream. Some of the *Eastern Nambicuara* build only shelters, although larger and stronger than the ones described. The beehive hut is very light, each about 10 to 20 feet (3 to 6 m.) in diameter. The frame consists of several long, supple poles, bent so that both ends can be stuck into the ground and tied together at the top, where they cross. Circular branches running horizontally are tied to the poles at different levels. The *Central* and *Western Nambicuara* have a more elaborate hut (pl. 37, *top*) whose perimeter is about 50 feet (15 m.). It has a central post from the base of which several forked poles run obliquely to support the bent poles of the external frame. All types of huts are thatched with horizontal layers of palm leaves, those of *Central* and *Western Nambicuara* exactly like the houses of their southern neighbors, the *Kepikiriwat*.

A gabled house without walls was also observed by Roquette-Pinto, who recorded other kinds of temporary huts. Some were built by sticking two branches into the ground, bending them over and attaching them to a horizontal pole tied to two perpendicular posts and covering them with bunches of grass.

352 513 The *Nambicuara*, although all their neighbors use hammocks, sleep on bare ground or on flat pieces of bark from the paxiuba palm. Because of this custom, the *Paressi* nicknamed them *Uaikoakôre*, "Those Who Sleep on the Ground."

CLOTHING AND ADORNMENT

[291] 301 Both sexes are naked, except that men sometimes tie a small tuft of buruty straw to their belt to cover the sex organs. Both men and women wear a thin, cotton-thread belt strung with white or black beads cut from river mollusk shells or from tucumã palm nuts. Such beads, with larger triangular pieces of mollusk shells, are also used for necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and other ornaments. Men wear grass or reed pins through their upper and lower lips; and, through their nasal septum, a larger pin made of a jacu (*Penelope*) feather mounted on a stalk covered with plaited cotton thread and porcupine quills and trimmed with a red toucan feather ring. Both sexes wear armlets and anklets of woven cotton, burity straw, feathers, parts of dried birds, fur, or mollusk or crawfish shells. Women wear one or more bracelets cut from the tail of the great armadillo and double bandoleers of plaited cotton dyed with urucú and decorated with porcupine quills. Hair ornaments are confined to men: circlets of plaited straw, of straw and and toucan feathers, or of fur with [714] feather pendants. War dress consists of a jaguar-skin bonnet (pl. 36, *top, left*) with a long, plaited buriti-straw tail painted with red stripes And dots hanging down from the nape of the neck.

361 clude at least one stretch of river and the "galeria"
621 forest which lines its banks. Except during the planting and harvesting season the members of the band are on the move up and down the narrow confines of the territory. Within this hunting territory they have camping places rather than villages. A semipermanent camp site where fields are cultivated for 2 or 3 years is known as *sinoiéu*. Any place where the band or a family may stop overnight is known as *sínau*. At present the
342 Wakiltisu band has one house (*síau*) at the place
621 where it is farming. The entire band occupies the house, each family having its own fire around
[513] which it sleeps at night. The unmarried men gather around another fire. Julio informed me that their house is rectangular with stake walls and a gable roof covered with sapé thatch. Some years ago when the band was larger he said they occupied a different place on which they built three houses. These houses were built by placing a series of saplings into the ground to form an oval. The tops were then fastened to a ridge pole, the framework being covered with sapé or palm fronds. A smaller beehive-shaped house is made in the same way. Houses of this type are from
[343 6 to 10 feet high. Near the living house they
346] build a small flute hut (*sinedéhkleu*) and, when the occasion demands, a shaman's hut (*sildentau*).

342 If the weather is cold while they are out hunting the band or the family may build a temporary brush hut for the night. Sometimes only a windbreak (*siatdatu*) is considered sufficient. On warm nights during the dry season the group camps under a tree. In favorite hunting places the same camp site will be used repeatedly.
[241] When the soil around the permanent camp site or village becomes exhausted, fields are cleared some distance away and small huts are put up for the workers. As the distance increases the old camp site is eventually abandoned and a new camp site is established.

352 As the Nambicuara do not use hammocks, beds, or seats, there is not much in the way of
415 furniture in their shelters. Utensils are restricted to a few gourd vessels, tin cans, burden baskets and small flat baskets, fire fans, bows and arrows,
[482 and tools used by men. When they move, these
462] articles are placed in burden baskets which are carried by the women. The Wakiltisu do not

The external layers cover the whole building, like very precise and well clipped sheets of straw. The side walls are not distinct from the roof, but mere extensions of it.

Of the two houses we have described, in the village close to the Carumi (or Festa da Bandeira) River, the larger covers 30 meters in circumference, the other 28. Their doorways measure 0.37 meters in width by 0.52 meters in height. These two houses stand on a plaza some twenty meters in diameter.

Inside the huts stand three bamboo grids [giraus] to dry manioc scrapings, and two enormous black pots which could not have come through the doors; lighter utensils and various other implements, as well as ornaments, are kept in the ceiling thatch. This serves as the Indians' closet, where they hide their smaller belongings. [Fig. 24]

A small fire burns underneath each grid.

These grids were made up of four bamboo stalks sunk into the ground and supporting a horizontal grate of small bamboo reeds. They measured about two meters in length by one and a half in width.

The huts are not equipped with any smoke holes, and none are needed. The smoke of inside fires filters easily through the interstices of the thatch.

Around the dwelling, scattered or in heaps, lie disjointed bones, fragmented coconuts, pods of the jatobá bean, corn cobs, charcoal, and food refuse, mixed with worn-out tools and utensils.

In the village on the Festa da Bandeira River, I found beside a house a large object which I only failed to bring back because it would have been absolutely impossible to transport it. It was of a kind commonly found in the sambaquis [224] of the Atlantic coast: a rock pitted with several depressions large enough to hold a fingertip. To one side lay a prodigious quantity of small bacaba nuts, both shelled and unshelled. It has often been inferred that this implement was used to produce fires, but in the Serra do Norte it merely serves to shell palm nuts. This stone, however, was much larger than those generally encountered in the sambaquis.

The temporary shelter consists of a screen of leaves and branches. The Indians may use it for a few days if hunting in the area is good; then they abandon it.

341 [226] We do not know yet what determines these shifts to nearby locations; they may perhaps be caused by the death of an [74] Indian or by some communal misfortune. The distances involved are so small that the moves could not possibly derive from any significant ecological changes.

342 In order to keep rain water from seeping underneath the thatch, the Tagnani and Tawite Indians cover the inner ground perimeter of their conical huts with a series of overlapping plates made of jatobá shells.

The rain does not leak in.

354 It would not be fair to imagine the interior of the huts as hot and stuffy; air penetrates freely in between the leaves.

Nevertheless, the situation changes when the Indians light their small fires. Happily for them, the thatch is sufficiently permeable to keep their eyes free from the grave diseases often encountered among primitive peoples whose dwellings are smoky.

352 Household furnishings are rudimentary; except for the grids mentioned above and a few large pots, nothing else might properly be termed a piece of furniture. All other objects are tools, artifacts, [84] weapons and ornaments [227] [plates p. 222] which they carry with them on every journey, no matter how brief. Only the heavier mortars and graters, which cannot be carried easily, are left in the hut. These barbarians in turn could say: "Omnia mea mecum porto" [everything that is mine I carry with me].

Straw pallets, cured hides, hammocks, sleeping platforms, cots and true beds represent types of bedding characteristic of different stages of civilization.

513 The use of pallets already indicates a certain degree of advancement; but the Nambicuara have no bed other than the earth. They sleep on the bare ground.

They did not possess the hammock, that inseparable companion of their neighbors the Paresi; now that they are acquainted with it, they hold it in high regard. It was difficult to obtain any rest among them during the night; no sooner had we set up our hammock than three or four candidates would appear... And once they had taken over, it was hard to get it back. We were frequently awakened by Indians who forcibly asserted their desire to sleep in the hammocks we occupied.